

ALC

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Morton ✓ *card*

4 SEP 1959

The Vice President
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On the 26th of August General Cushman of your office asked that we provide you with a compilation of the colorful statements and the threatening anti-Western statements made publicly by Mr. Khrushchev during the past two years.

In the interest of brevity no attempt has been made to extract all such statements from the Russian press and radio. The attached material represents selected statements chosen primarily from Radio Moscow or Tass.

I trust that this material meets your requirements.

Respectfully yours,

Signed C. P. CABELL

C. P. Cabell
General, USAF
Acting Director

DAD/O - [] gwb - 3 Sept 59

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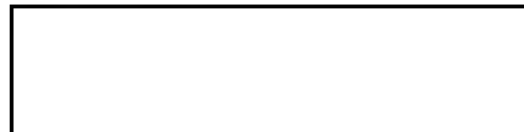
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4 SEP 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Request from the Vice President for a Sampling of Threatening Statements, Colorful Statements and Anti-Western Statements by Khrushchev Over the Past Few Years.

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the Acting DCI. Such requested action is contained in paragraph four.
2. On 26 August General Cushman, Office of the Vice President, called and stated that Mr. Nixon would like to have from us all of the most colorful statements and all of the most threatening anti-Western statements made by Khrushchev from the time when he assumed supreme power in the USSR.
3. After further discussions with General Cushman it was decided that we would not attempt to screen out and list all such statements but would instead provide a selection covering the last two years. This has now been done and the statements are herewith forwarded.
4. It is recommended that the attached letter to the Vice President enclosing the requested material be signed by you.



STAT

Assistant Director for Operations

Enclosure:

Proposed letter to Vice
President w/enclosures

cc: DDCI *w/enclosures*
DD/I *w/enclosure*

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3 September 1959



25X1

SELECTED STATEMENTS BY KHRUSHCHEV

I. THREATENING STATEMENTS

On Retaliation A1
On Soviet and Bloc Strength B1
On the Destruction of Capitalism C1

II. COLORFUL STATEMENTS

On the Bloc versus the West D1
On Germany D2
On Friendship D2
On Secrets and Confidences D3
On the Press and Propaganda D3
On Agriculture D4
On Literature D4
On Religion D6
About Himself D6

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Part I of this collation reproduces a selection of threatening statements made publicly by Khrushchev during the past two years. The statements are reproduced in reverse chronological order within each of three categories-- (A) retaliation, (B) Soviet and bloc strength, and (C) the "destruction of capitalism." Introductory remarks on pages A1, B1, and C1 indicate the degree to which the statements included in the compilation are typical.

Part II reproduces a selection of colorful statements-- metaphors, maxims, coined phrases--used by Khrushchev in speeches during the past two years. A selection of speeches made both in the USSR and abroad were examined. Most of the speeches were made during 1959. Several were broadcast live.

The source of all the statements in this compilation is Radio Moscow or TASS unless otherwise noted.

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A1

I. THREATENING STATEMENTS

A. ON RETALIATION

Khrushchev has invariably accompanied his charges of Western "aggressive plans" with warnings of Soviet or bloc retaliation. In many cases he has warned simply that the USSR would give "due rebuff" to any Western aggression. But on some occasions he has specified that the USSR would destroy the bases from which aggression was launched or that the USSR "can hit any point on the globe."

Soviet capability to deal retaliatory blows directly against the United States was emphasized by Khrushchev particularly in the period following the USSR's August 1957 ICBM test and the subsequent sputnik launchings.

Some of Khrushchev's explicit saber-rattling statements are reproduced in this section, followed by a selection of his more generalized threats.

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A2

1. Atypically Harsh Statements

At present only wild people can dream about revenge. What would happen, for instance, if West Germany with the support of its allies would start war against us? It would surely be defeated in a brief time in the same manner the whole grouping of enemy forces would be defeated. On what are such suppositions based? You probably have an idea how many nuclear bombs with a capacity of 3 to 5 million tons would have to be exploded over the territory of West Germany in order to put it out of action.

(Editor G. Braune: Eight Hydrogen Bombs.)

Obviously not more, And what do you think, do we have eight hydrogen bombs?

(G. Braune: Surely, even more.)

And how many are needed for putting out of action other West European countries? Obviously not more.

You may say: But, would the Soviet Union suffer no losses in the event of war? Yes, it would have losses, and great ones. But, while we would suffer losses, the Western powers would be literally wiped off the face of the earth. And the first to suffer in this connection would be the countries in which the Americans are locating their rocket bases. (interview with SPD editors, 5 May 1959)

Some exceedingly boastful American generals and admirals say that the United States, if it started a war now, would destroy the USSR in several days. Obviously they are weak in mathematics. Otherwise they might ask themselves the question: and how long would it take to destroy the United States if it unleashed a war? For war is not a one-sided operation; it can turn badly against the side which begins it. It is common knowledge that the other side has no fewer forces and possibilities than those represented by Taylor and Burke. (in Moscow, 19 March 1959)

If a war is unleashed now by the aggressive circles of the United States, it will be waged not only in Europe, in Asia, or Africa. This war will immediately be carried on to the territory of the United States because intercontinental ballistic missiles now

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A3

make it possible to hit a target in any area of the globe. In this case, the American people will suffer enormous losses.

All means--intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine missiles, and other means which now exist--will be used in case of an armed conflict. You yourself understand that is the logic of war, the logic of struggle. (in an interview with Hearst, 22 November 1957)

If war is not averted, the Americans will experience the most devastating war ever known by mankind. It will rage not only in Europe and Asia but, with no lesser fury in the United States. ...it should be borne in mind that modern military techniques make it possible to keep all of America's vital centers under fire from submarines and with the help of ballistic missiles, and to blockade the U.S. coast. This means that the United States is now just as vulnerable as any other country. (in an interview with Shapiro, 14 November 1957)

You insist on this flying business and looking at our factories. You know those rockets made the situation more frightful. Now we can destroy countries in a few minutes. How many bombs does it take to destroy West Germany? How many for France? How many for England? Just a few. We have now H-bombs and rockets. We do not even have to send any bombers. (in an interview with Mrs. Roosevelt, 29 September 1957, not released by Moscow)

2. Examples of Routine Statements

I also told Mr. Nixon that if the West German militarists start a war, we could with our retaliatory actions in several hours wipe from the face of the earth West Germany and other countries with military bases directed against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Treaty countries. (in Dnepropetrovsk, 28 July 1959)

When the imperialists dare attack you or us or any other country of the socialist camp, we will be able to deal them a smashing, annihilating repulse. (in Tirana, 30 May 1959)

Everyone knows that the Soviet Union threatens nobody, and no one with common sense will start war against our country, for this threatens them with a crushing defeat. (in Kishinev, 14 May 1959)

We are not among the fainthearted, and we are ready to give the due rebuff to any attempt to use force against us or our friends. (in Berlin, 9 March 1959)

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A4

We do not want war and we will do everything to prevent it. But if the Western powers were to start war, its outcome, given the modern military techniques, would be fatal to them. After all, when they say that they have military bases close to our frontiers, it is to be understood that these bases are not located on the moon, but in densely populated areas. And if these bases are close to us, this means that we are close to them. (in Leipzig, 4 March 1959)

We do not want to go to war, and we have no intention of crossing the frontiers of other states. We do not need anyone else's land or wealth. We have vast lands and inexhaustible riches of our own. Yet should our frontiers or those of our allies be violated, we cannot remain inactive. Whoever tries to violate these frontiers and to implement his predatory aims by the force of arms will be given a crushing rebuff. (in Tula, 17 February 1959)

In point of fact, the Soviet Union today has the means to deliver a crushing blow to the aggressor at any point on the globe. (in Moscow, 5 February 1959)

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B1

B. ON SOVIET AND BLOC STRENGTH

Khrushchev compares Soviet or bloc strength with that of the West in the following selection of public statements made during the past two years.

Although most of the statements cited deal with military power, it should be noted that explicit characterizations of over-all Soviet strength in terms of military might are the exception rather than the rule, both for Khrushchev and for Soviet propaganda as a whole. Soviet propaganda, unlike that of Communist China, never portrays the United States as militarily weak. The vast majority of Soviet statements about the USSR's or the bloc's prowess are couched in general terms--references to the bloc as "strong" or "mighty" or to the socialist system as superior.

The atypically explicit statements quoted here include Khrushchev's unprecedented claim--in his 20 July 1959 speech in Rzeszow, Poland--that Soviet bombers are superior to those of the United States. This claim was reported by the Polish Press Agency but was not mentioned in PRAVDA's account of the speech. In prior speeches Khrushchev had denigrated the role of bomber aircraft in a war but had not explicitly disparaged U.S. as compared with Soviet bombers.

Also reproduced here are a few of the statements in which Khrushchev discussed all-around bloc strength and the "balance of forces." The term "balance of forces," as used in Soviet propaganda, has only once been clearly defined: In his interview with a Danish paper (page B3 of this compilation), Khrushchev explained that political, economic, and military factors were all involved.

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B2

ON SOVIET AND BLOC STRENGTH

It should be borne in mind that if the West Germans use all the economic potential and manpower resources of their country for creating the most powerful army in West Europe, even the strength of that army would not be equal to the power of our army and those of our allies. Even with its allies, the Federal Republic would not be able to equal our strength and power. (in a letter to Adenauer, 19 August 1959)

The Americans boast that they have long-range heavy bombers. The role of bombers is no longer so great as formerly. We build bombers just to keep in practice. Americans boast about the record range and ceiling of their bombers, but these records belong to the Soviet Air Force--a fact recently reported in the press. The capitalist world maintains that it will catch up with us in the field of technology, but it seems that nobody doubts that we will not stand still and passively watch their endeavors. (in Rzeszow, Poland, 20 July 1959, as reported by the Polish News Agency)

If the imperialists attempt to attack us, we are capable of inflicting such a blow on them that they will be unable to recover. ...The imperialists know our might. To attack us is tantamount to suicide; one would be insane to do so. I do not believe they are as stupid as all that; I believe they are aware of the consequences which the unleashing of a war against the socialist countries may have for them. (in Vlore, 31 May 1959)

We, too, can do some scaring--the more so since we have what is needed to scare them with. Indeed, they are threatening us because they are afraid of our successes. The Soviet Union's successes in peaceful development, the impetuous growth of our peaceful economy--that is what the imperialists now fear in particular. They are in no position to stop our forward movement. They understand that it is not wise to go to war with us. Why? It is because war promises them nothing good. The imperialists can, of course, inflict no little destruction on our country. But our country is big; it is difficult to defeat it in war. If the imperialists unleash war, they will be threatened with inevitable catastrophe. (in Kiev, 11 May 1959)

It is time to understand that the days when the imperialists could act with impunity from the position of strength are gone beyond recall. Whatever the military may try, they are unable to change the correlation of forces to their advantage. They cannot forget the geographical situation of West Germany which, with the present military techniques, would not last a day in a modern war. (in Moscow, 10 November 1958)

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B3

Those who now want to come out again under the shabby flag of the fight against communism should not forget the fiasco experienced by all kinds of anticommunist "axes" and "triangles" in the recent past. It would also be profitable for them to keep it in mind that the balance of power in the international arena has radically changed, compared with the years before the Second World War, in favor of the forces of peace and progress. It is understandable that in these conditions any government which allows itself to be carried away with hatred for the peoples which are building a new society would embark on an extremely dangerous road at the end of which it would be awaited by an inevitable catastrophe and no axes or blocs could be of any help. (in an interview with DIE ZEIT, 23 September 1958)

The launching of the Soviet sputniks first of all shows the outstanding successes scored by the Soviet Union in the development of science and technology and also that the USSR has outstripped the leading capitalist country, the United States, in the field of scientific and technical progress. The launching of the sputniks also shows without doubt that a serious change has occurred in the balance of forces between the countries of socialism and capitalism in favor of the socialist nations. Balance of forces is a broad conception which includes political, economic, and military factors. (in an interview with DANSK FOLKESTYRE, 15 January 1958)

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C. ON THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM

This section reproduces a selection of statements since the 20th CPSU Congress (February 1956) in which Khrushchev has forecast the "destruction of capitalism" in the event of global war.

While Khrushchev continues to reiterate this orthodox communist thesis on the ultimate consequences of world war, he has at the same time become increasingly frank about the mutual destruction that would result from a thermonuclear war. In Moscow on 14 November 1958 he declared that with the push of one button "whole cities will be blown sky-high, whole cities can be destroyed." In a letter to a Japanese anti-nuclear-weapons group on 14 April 1958 he spoke of the importance of preventing "a rocket and nuclear war which would spell ruin for all mankind." And in Moscow on 14 March 1958 he declared that use of nuclear weapons would "poison the atmosphere with radioactive fallout, and this may lead to the destruction of nearly all living organisms."

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C2

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM

As a result of a third world war, should one ever be launched by the imperialists, capitalism will be eliminated. We are convinced of this. We hope that the imperialists also understand this and will not play with fire. (in Dnepropetrovsk, 28 July 1959)

The imperialists would like to make short shrift of the socialist camp, to wipe the socialist countries off the face of the earth, but they are powerless to do so. They realize that a war can be started--one need not be too clever for that--but how will it end? We are convinced that should the imperialists touch off such a war it will end in the destruction of capitalism. (in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

The situation is now such that the imperialists will hardly dare to unleash a war against the countries of the socialist camp. Everyone who is capable of thinking and considering soundly, cannot fail to see that the USSR and countries of the socialist camp are now at such a high level of development that an attempt to unleash a new war against these countries will end in the collapse of the capitalist system. (in Krasnodar, 16 October 1958)

The aggressive bloc of the Western powers has up to now refused to take any earnest steps to save peace, but on the contrary is aggravating international tension unscrupulously, thus bringing mankind to the brink of a war catastrophe. They should know, however, that if the imperialist war maniacs should dare to impose war on the people of the world, all the countries and people who love peace and freedom will unite closely to wipe out clean the imperialist aggressors and so establish everlasting world peace. (in the communique signed with Mao Tse-tung, 3 August 1958)

We need not be scientists or military experts to understand that a future war, if it were unleashed by criminal forces, would cause immeasurable harm to all mankind.... It is our firm conviction that in the event of an armed conflict, the socialist system would be victorious and the capitalist system would be unable to weather the grave ordeals. (in Budapest, 3 April 1958)

The process of historic development is inexorable. It cannot be stopped by any reactionary forces. Should they try to do so by force of arms and unleash war, they will dig their graves with their own hands. The peoples will no longer tolerate a system which gives birth to wars and brings to mankind torment and suffering. (in Moscow, 21 December 1957)

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C3

This does not mean that war cannot flare up. As I have said, one cannot vouch for a madman. But the actual correlation of forces is such that the militarists and monopolists would do well to pause and think--and think hard--before starting a war. It is our conviction that if a war is started--and only imperialist countries can do it because no socialist state is interested in war--capitalism will be routed. And it will be the last suffering that the capitalist world will have inflicted on mankind, for capitalism will be done with once and for all. (in Moscow, 14 November 1957)

With the contemporary development of military technique, an attempt of the imperialists to unleash a world war would lead to inconceivably great destruction and losses. The use of atomic and hydrogen weapons, of ballistic rockets, would result in enormous calamity for all mankind. In provoking this calamity the capitalist regime will doom itself to an inevitable end. The peoples will no longer countenance a system which brings torment and suffering to mankind and unleashes bloody aggressive wars.

Although we are convinced that as a result of a new war, should it be unleashed by capitalist circles, the system which creates wars, the capitalist system, would perish and the socialist system would win, we Communists do not aspire for victory in this way; we Communists have never striven and will never strive to achieve our aims by such terrible means. (in Moscow, 6 November 1957)

Some reproach me for allegedly changing my point of view, since I once said that if an atomic war came about it would be capitalism that would perish in that war. This I repeat today. But we think that capitalism should be destroyed not by means of war and military conflicts but through an ideological and economic struggle....

[Cutler, referring to Khrushchev's remark that a future war would destroy capitalism, asked him whether he thought a future war would destroy Communism as well.] No it would not. It would bring mankind great calamities, great losses in men, destruction of wealth, but mankind would not perish after all. And since mankind would continue to exist, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism are immortal. That is why mankind would be rid of capitalism. But war is such a price that we should not resort to it. It would be harmful to the socialist countries as well as to the capitalist countries. (in Moscow, 28 May 1957)

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II. COLORFUL STATEMENTS

ON THE BLOC VERSUS THE WEST

Now the United States and several other Western countries refuse to recognize the CPR, a great country with a population of over 650 million. But this does not alter the fact that the CPR exists and is gathering great strength. Speaking figuratively, if all the people of People's China were to sneeze there would be a storm in some countries not recognizing the CPR at present. (Speech to the Moldavian Supreme Soviet, 14 May 1959)

They say that they have more bombers, and the Soviet Union has fewer bombers. They allege that the Soviet Union has but few intercontinental rockets. ...It should be pointed out that it is always better to count in one's own pocket than in someone else's. (Interview with SPD editors, 5 May 1959)

Eminent Social Democratic leaders, who called themselves Marxists, asserted that the birth of the Soviet state was unlawful, that the socialist revolution in Russia was an illegitimate revolution. ...You know how they [illegitimate children] are regarded in the capitalist society. And yet, illegitimate children are frequently far stronger and more gifted than legitimate children. (Speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

The imperialists would like to destroy the socialist countries as a hungry wolf would like to kill a lion, but here is the rub: his stomach is too small and the teeth, too, are not what they were-- worn down, you know. (Speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

[Regarding intervention in Lebanon and Jordan] ...it is high time to understand that lions can no longer frighten people by their roaring, that it is a thing of the past when countries could be seized with impunity and peoples plundered. (at a Moscow reception for UAR Defense Minister Amir, 21 October 1958)

We do not want to be like the lamb who is defenseless against the wolf. Both the lamb and the wolf live on the same earth. But the wolf devours the lamb by the right of strength. We do not want to be in the position of the lamb. We must have teeth so that the wolves know they cannot attack peace-loving countries with impunity. The wolves may lose their skins and maybe even more-- their heads. (Interview with the Tokyo ASAHI SHIMBUN, 18 June 1957)

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ON GERMANY

...are we supposed to compel the workers of the GDR to go back to the capitalist slavery of West Germany? No! The capitalist gentlemen will have to wait for this till the shrimp whistles, as the saying goes. Anyway, who knows if a shrimp whistles at all? (Moldavian Supreme Soviet, 14 May 1959)

What can I say about Chancellor Adenauer? He is quarrelsome like a young fighting cock. (Kremlin press conference, 19 March 1959)

To do so reunify Germany at the expense of the GDR and the socialist front would be to imitate the proverbial crucian carp which wanted to jump into the pike's mouth, and in such a way as not to scratch its throat. (Speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

In Germany, there always were so many trends and hues in the labor movement that--as the Russian saying goes--the devil himself would break a leg before he makes head or tail of it. (Speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

...Herr Adenauer, the Chancellor of West Germany...banks on a continuation of the cold war and the pursuance of the positions-of-strength policy. You, Herr Kanzler, are sitting on the river bank with a fishing rod and waiting for a fish to bite. But the fish you want does not live in that river. Is it not time you gave up dreams that cannot come true? (At the 21st CPSU Congress, 5 February 1959)

ON FRIENDSHIP

We want to be friends with the United States and all other countries. So let us stop talking about diktat and ultimatums. Let us stop dragging a dead cat about by its tail. ...I pulled a dead cat by the tail to liven up our conversation. (During exchange with Nixon at U.S. exhibition, Moscow, 29 July 1959)

Our country is larger than Iran; our territory is boundless. So we thought: Well, why should we act like hairsplitters and split hairs? ...we would rather not bargain about an extra penny; it is worth more to gain friends than to have an extra penny in our pocket. (Pre-election speech in Moscow, 24 February 1959)

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ON SECRETS AND CONFIDENCES

[The Shah of Iran] had developed behind-the-scenes activity. You know how secrets are kept. I think that the Shah of Iran knows himself. And if he does not..., may I tell him that many secrets are not kept for more than a week or two before everybody finds them out. Anyone who has a secret has most intimate friends to whom he confides one's most cherished secret. But anyone who is told such a secret has his own friends of this kind. And he will also want to tell his friends "most confidentially," "just between himself, his friend, and the lamppost." The latter will then tell this to his own friend, and so the whole world learns these secrets. (Preelection speech in Moscow, 24 February 1959)

You will remember that this Senator [Humphrey] recently visited the Soviet Union and I had a talk with him. In the expectation of a noisy sensation, Humphrey, in his speeches and articles, told fairy tales three bags full, such as the story that he brought a special message from the Soviet Government to President Eisenhower--of course no such message existed at all--and that I had confided two important secrets to him. Indeed, I could not find a better partner to share secrets with than Mr. Humphrey! Senator Humphrey's wild imagination ran riot when he began to make up his inventions about the relations between the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic. In this he even exceeded the well-known compiler of fabrications, Baron Muenchausen. (at the 21st CPSU Congress, 5 February 1959)

ON THE PRESS AND PROPAGANDA

...I would like to tell you a funny Eastern anecdote, Mr. Nixon. A mullah once walked along the road. When he was asked where he was going he said: Up there, that mountain; they say you can get food free there. People went in crowds to the place pointed out by the mullah. When the mullah saw this he himself believed in his lie: Is it possible that they are really giving out food for nothing up there? And he joined the crowds. This is just like your propaganda. (during exchange with Vice President Nixon at U.S. exhibition, 24 July 1959)

Among the hundreds of thousands of kind and joyful faces of the people who welcomed us here, I have also seen people at some meetings whose faces were rather sad. And when I had a good look at them I was convinced that I had seen many of them before. They are, as it were, my traveling companions (sputniki) who

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accompany me on my visits to various countries. They are some of the journalists of the bourgeois newspapers of Western countries. (speech in Warsaw, 21 July 1959)

I like very much the words of August Bebel: If the enemy praises you, think what folly you have committed, think what is he praising you for. I am happy that we communists need not trouble ourselves about this because we have never heard any praise from the capitalist world. I sincerely wish you the same. (speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

This [Yugoslav revisionists] reminds me of the way perky newsvenders sold their gutter papers in tsarist Russia. The newsvendors would come running along shouting "Extraordinary occurrence! Woman gives birth to a girl with whiskers!" And the inexperienced reader, of course, would grab the newspaper and look for the report of that event and would find nothing of the sort. But the newsvendor had sold his paper; he had done his job. It seems to me that Senator Humphrey and the Yugoslavs who broadcast his inventions have something in common with salesmen of the yellow press. (at the 21st CPSU Congress, 5 February 1959)

ON AGRICULTURE

[The best variety of wheat in the Ukraine is "Ukrainka"] If you want to have a buxom wife, sow "Ukrainka" wheat. (speech in Poznan, Poland, 18 July 1959)

[Regarding low-quality cuttings planted in vineyards] ...instead of good grapes you will produce grapes so sour as to make the blind see and the seeing blind. (speech in Kiev, 11 May 1959)

ON LITERATURE

I have already said that I shall not mention the names of either embellishers or nonembellishers, that is, the people who wish to show only the negative. You won't get out of the bog if you ride a "negative" hack, nor will you get far on a good road.

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[Story about corn seedlings grown in a hothouse and transplanted versus corn planted in the field] Look at the transplanted corn. It is sickly and yellow. There is no green. It look like the suntan of a man who has been under an umbrella. ...To a certain extent, certain of our budding writers remind me of corn which, before being planted out, has been raised in a hothouse.

When you read books, some will move you and give you pleasure; others will anger you and make you indignant at this or that phenomenon reflected in the work. Others will cause your eyelids to droop. You want to read it because your comrades, who read it, talked about it, you want to form your own opinion of it--but it is difficult to read, your eyelids droop once again and you rub them and when you resume your reading they droop once more. To read the book despite everything, you might take a pin and prick yourself to keep yourself awake to finish the book.

[Regarding Dudintsev's "Not by Bread Alone"] ...it was there that such a sweet-smelling bouquet was gathered! Of course, everything that was said there was not badly said. I read this book and must say that I read it without needing a pin. There are some pages in the book which deserve attention. Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, who read this work before I did, said to me: "Read it! He has got arguments which sound as if he heard them from you."

You are well aware that in analyzing literary works one must praise one, criticize another, and place the third in the middle. You cannot present the matter as if a man had come along with two bags, one containing sweets, the other bitter pills, and started distributing them: one sweet for one, two sweets for another and a bitter pill for the third. It would be much more proper for you to share the sweets and swallow pills among yourselves, deciding when this is necessary and who is in need of what.

A good literary critic can do very much even for the very best writer. A clever critical article is a kind of birch switch for a man who likes to steam himself in the Banya. He steams himself and flicts himself with the switch, and if he does not want to do this for himself, then someone else will do it for him; it is not a bad thing to steam oneself with a switch, because one's pores open up and begin to breathe better; it becomes easier to live. (to the Soviet Writers Congress, 23 May 1959)

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ON RELIGION

Although I am an atheist, I do not want to give offense to religious people. I think they will take no offense if I say: destroy the myth about the devil and the priest will be out of a job. Whom will he save the peoples from if they would not believe in the devil? (speech in Leipzig, 7 March 1959)

ABOUT HIMSELF

You obviously know that I am not placid by temperament and do not like chewing the cud. Everyone at his post must be active.

* * *

...thanks to you for your attention, for having listened to me. If I said anything inopportune I think you will forgive me. I admit I got very agitated and worked up. I thought first of speaking with a prepared text, but you know my character: I do not like to read, I like to talk. You, comrades, know how difficult it can be to make a speech. When the speech is written and prepared you can sleep soundly, but when it is necessary to speak without a text, then you can't sleep well. You wake up and begin to think how best to formulate this or that question. You begin to argue with yourself. A speech without a text is a very heavy cross for a speaker to bear. I, of course, am not insured against slips of the tongue. Therefore, I beg you not to be severe judges. If you noticed any slips, do not judge too harshly.

* * *

I read what the President of the United States of America said that the Prime Minister of this or that country said. I read much more of such literature than of your works. Not, of course, because I like this literature better than your books, but because, in my position, it is impossible not to read it. (to the Soviet Writers Congress, 23 May 1959)

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